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SUBJECT: NEW UNITED NATIONS COORDINATION STRUCTURE FOR IRAQ

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY: During meetings in early December with the UNHCR Donor Mission, a Baghdad-Amman VTC with donors, and the recent USAID/OFDA conference in Amman on IDPs, Deputy Special Representative for the Secretary General (DSRSG) in Iraq David Shearer presented his main priorities for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), including the implementation of a new UN Country Team (UNCT) Iraq Coordination Structure for humanitarian, reconstruction, and development sectors. He sees an opportunity to significantly change programming in Iraq due to Security Council Resolution 1770, significant support from the Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, and an overall recognition that humanitarian programming and coordination currently taking place in Iraq is dismal. Shearer has six priorities for UNAMI and the UN Country Team in the coming months, including implementation of the new UNCT Coordination Structure, increasing the number of UN senior staff in Baghdad, and bolstering humanitarian financing for Iraq. END SUMMARY

TRANSFORMATION OF UNCT COORDINATION STRUCTURE IN IRAQ

12. (SBU) David Shearer was appointed DSRSG on August 22 and also serves as the UN Resident Coordinator and the Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq. Shearer implemented a new UNCT coordination structure on December 1, thereby abolishing the former cluster approach. Shearer stated that he was appalled at the lack of coordination among actors in Iraq. Coordination was previously centered around funding, as opposed to strategic coordination centered on sectoral responses. The new structure realigns UN goals with the International Compact for Iraq (ICI), increases coordination and capacity building with the GOI, and emphasizes increased senior international UN posts and decision making in Baghdad.

13. (SBU) The new structure is comprised of four policy groups - essential social services, protection, governance, and economic development - led by senior UN representatives in Baghdad. These representatives will be the primary UN interlocutors on humanitarian, development and reconstruction issues with the GOI, MNF-I, donors, and other actors based in Baghdad. The four policy groups will coordinate with the ICI thematic working groups and work closely with eight sector outcome teams, including education, water/sanitation, health/nutrition, and food security, based in Amman. Sector teams will be led by a UN agency with participation from IOs and NGOs. NOTE: The former cluster system did not allow for NGO participation at the same level as IO participation. END NOTE. Each sector team will be the key coordinating body to respond to needs for that specific sector. OCHA expects sector teams to start meeting this week. In addition to the sector teams, there will also be an information management

support group and an advocacy working group.

¶4. (SBU) Within the new structure, humanitarian assistance will be coordinated through the humanitarian working group (HWG) led by OCHA. This cross-sectoral group will support, mobilize, and coordinate humanitarian outcome teams across sectors. The IDP working group, established under the former structure and chaired by UNHCR, will continue to function until the HWG is operational. Once the HWG is fully operational, the IDP working group may merge into the HWG. IDP issues will fall under both the protection and essential social services policy groups. There are many details of the coordination structure that will need to be resolved over the coming weeks. The UNCT is still discussing which UN agency will be the chair and deputy chair for each sector team. UNHCR will participate in leading the protection and housing sector outcome teams, but it is still not clear which team it will chair.

SHEARER'S TOP PRIORITIES

¶5. (SBU) Increasing international posts in Iraq: Shearer is focused on increasing the number of international posts in Iraq, with a particular emphasis on moving senior level posts in each humanitarian sector to Baghdad. The UN has now officially opened an office in Irbil. Shearer plans to establish a UN presence at the air base in Basra by the end of January, and hopes to officially open an office in Basra contingent on security considerations. The UN is also looking into whether they have established more stringent requirements in Iraq than in other countries of operation.

¶6. (SBU) Strengthening information management: Shearer stated

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that the UN in Iraq has been particularly bad at information management, and that he has made improving information management one of his top priorities. The UN currently operates 19 different databases about operations in Iraq, and only five of these databases are cross-linked. The UN has little access to comprehensive, analyzed data. In addition, organizations operating inside Iraq have little information about the activities of other actors. Through the new coordination structure, OCHA will take the lead role in trying to improve information management over the coming year.

¶7. (SBU) Increasing coordination with GOI: Through the new coordination structure and increasing the number of international posts, UNAMI plans to increase coordination with the GOI. The UNCT hopes to rely more heavily on the implementation of GOI ministries, while operating programs to fill in gaps. Shearer pointed to the Joint GOI-UN Rapid Response Plan for Assistance to Iraqi Returnees and WFP's work with the GOI on expanding the public distribution system as examples of recent UN-GOI coordination.

¶8. (SBU) Bolstering Humanitarian Financing inside Iraq: The UNCT is currently engaged in a Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) to be launched at the January. The CAP is focused on providing protection and essential social services to vulnerable Iraqis. Shearer hopes the CAP will increase coordination and present a targeted approach to UN operations in Iraq. Shearer is also pushing donors to increase support for the Emergency Trust Fund (ERF) and the micro-grant program managed by OCHA. These programs can provide immediate funding for NGOs to address emergency needs.

¶9. (SBU) Defining Military/Humanitarian Involvement and Coordination: UNAMI will be the primary UN interlocutor with MNF-I, and will discuss issues related to protocols, common priorities, and information exchange. Shearer hopes to work closer with MNF-I to develop a better understanding of one another's activities and priorities in Iraq.

¶10. (U) This message was coordinated with Embassy Baghdad.

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